



**Committee on
Homeland Security Democrats**
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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**Committee Democrats Introduce Legislation Creating a Real Border Security Strategy to
Secure America**

Democratic Substitute Introduced During Committee Markup of Border Security Bill

WASHINGTON-- House Homeland Security Committee Democrats, led by Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), today offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute to the Republicans' "Border Security and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2005" (H.R. 4312), which the Committee is considering today.

The Democratic substitute takes concrete steps to ensure the Department of Homeland Security produces a comprehensive land border security strategy that addresses specific, longstanding gaps in our nation's border security.

"We need to give the Department of Homeland Security the personnel, equipment and training its employees need to secure our borders," said Rep. Thompson. "This amendment meets those needs in a comprehensive way. While the Committee's bill is a good first step, it just doesn't go as far as this amendment."

The Democratic substitute includes a proposal to coordinate Northern and Southern border protection while maintaining the free flow of travelers and trade. It also holds the Department accountable to the Congress by requiring it to fulfill critical reporting obligations.

Another key feature of the substitute is that it reauthorizes the hiring of substantial numbers of new Border Patrol agents and inspectors and provides for more detention bed space. Many of these needs were addressed in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (known as the "9/11 Act"), but the President and Congress have still not provided all of the amounts authorized in that law. The Republican bill the Committee is considering today also fails to do this. This Democratic substitute would correct those shortfalls.

The substitute also calls for full deployment of surveillance systems along the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada, enhances canine detection and enforcement teams, and improves the foreign language training of agents and inspectors working along our borders.

"We need a comprehensive border security strategy, but that won't secure our border alone," Rep. Thompson added. "We need to ensure that there are sufficient well-trained and well-equipped personnel at our border, sufficient detention and removal space, and real fines and criminal penalties associated with alien smuggling and human trafficking. America deserves for us to do all we can to make America safer."

Thompson's substitute amendment failed by one vote, 15-14.

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